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ABSTRACT

For more than a decade, demand for summer school has been increasing nationwide. Currently, approximately 10 percent of all students--or 5 million students in elementary through high school--enroll in summer school. Increased demands may continue because of shifts in family dynamics with more single-parent families and more working parents in need of child care during summer months, concern among policymakers about global economic competitiveness and the need for an educated work force for the future, and emphasis on higher academic standards nationwide. Different types of summer programs include academic programs, enrichment programs, programs to serve special populations, and 21st century community learning centers. Some key research findings are that programs that focus on lessening or removing learning deficiencies, that focus on accelerated learning, and that provide small-group or individualized instruction have a positive effect on the knowledge and skills of students. Different strategies for effective delivery of summer instruction are presented, along with challenges that summer school may pose. Implications for program planners and coordinators, parents, and community partners are also discussed. This booklet concludes with a sampler of profiles of summer programs serving students in the Northwest region, and a list of reading and funding resources. (Contains 25 references.) (RT)

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SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: A Look at the Research, Implications for Practice, and Program Sampler

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SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: A Look at the Research, Implications for Practice, and Program Sampler

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NORTHWEST REGIONAL
EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

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FOREWORD

This booklet is one in a series of "hot topics" reports produced by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. These reports briefly address current educational concerns and issues as indicated by requests for information that come to the Laboratory from the Northwest region and beyond.

One objective of the series is to foster a sense of community and connection among educators. Another is to increase awareness of current education-related themes and concerns. Each booklet gives practitioners a glimpse of how fellow educators from around the Northwest are addressing issues, overcoming obstacles, and attaining success. The goal of the series is to give educators current, reliable, and useful information on topics that are important to them.

Each booklet in the series contains a discussion of research and literature pertinent to the issue, a sampling of how Northwest schools and programs are addressing the issue, selected resources, and contact information.

INTRODUCTION

For a great number of city children, the vacation school is almost the most welcome and attractive feature of the vacation term. With its pleasant lessons, its amusements, and the occasional outings it affords, it holds the interest of children where the ordinary school curriculum simply bores them.

—From the *School Board Journal*, 1902, as cited in *American School Board Journal*, 2002

Ah, summertime. For many children and their families, the word conjures up images of lazy days, family vacations, camp activities, and freedom from the constraints of school-year schedules.

Of course, summer's not always so idyllic. Many working parents must scramble to find safe, affordable child care or piece together short-term activities for their school-aged children. For adolescents—who may resist being enrolled in structured activities—too much unsupervised time can lead to everything from boredom to risky behaviors.

Increasingly, educators and parents are also looking to summer as an extended learning season, particularly for students who struggle to meet academic goals during the nine-month school year. By 2000, more than a quarter of the nation's school districts were requiring summer school attendance of students who were not meeting standards for promotion (Mathews, 2000). Among the 50 largest districts, almost half now offer summer classes, and many make attendance mandatory for students who are behind grade level (Harrington-Leuker, 2000).

Boosting academic achievement is only one goal of summer programming. Many parents seek summer enrichment opportunities for their children in special interest areas such as art, music, technology, or sports. Some summer programs recruit students from populations traditionally underrepresented in fields such as math and science. For working parents, especially, summer can pose a challenge: Where to find safe, engaging activities for their children that are also affordable? Educational summer programs provide a welcome solution for many working families.

Tapping summer as a season for learning instead of leisure raises many questions, including:

- What are the different types of summer programs?
- What are the potential benefits of summer school?
- What strategies are most effective for delivering summer instruction?
- What challenges does summer school pose?
- Where are the implications for program planners and coordinators?
- What are the implications for parents?
- What are the implications for community partners?

Although summer school has not been a hot topic for study in the past, researchers are taking a fresh look at learning that takes place during the summer months. This booklet provides a summary of recent research on summer school, as well as profiles of summer programs serving students in the Northwest region.

IN CONTEXT

For more than a decade, demand for summer school has been on the rise nationwide. From 1991 to 1999, the percentage of public elementary schools eligible for aid under Title I that use federal funds to subsidize summer school programs rose from 15 percent to 41 percent (Cooper, 2001). From 1998 to 2000, the 10 largest districts in the country saw summer school enrollment swell from 600,000 to 850,000 students (Cooper). Currently, approximately 10 percent of all students—or 5 million students in elementary through high school—enroll in summer school.

In both rural and urban communities, grants from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program are helping to pay for summer programming. The federal program reauthorized under Title IV, Part B, of the No Child Left Behind Act is designed to provide extended opportunities for academic enrichment to help students—especially those who attend low-performing, high-poverty schools—meet state and local achievement standards in core subjects, such as reading and math. In addition to offering academic support during the after-school hours, community learning centers may offer students a broad array of additional services and activities, including youth development activities; drug and violence prevention; counseling; art, music, and recreation; technology education; and character education. New grants totaling $325 million will be awarded to state departments of education under the new state-administered program. About 6,800 rural and inner-city public schools in 1,420 communities—in collaboration with other public and nonprofit agencies, organizations, local businesses, postsecondary institutions, scientific/cul-

tural and other community entities—are now participating as 21st Century CLCs.

More information about this program including a list of state contacts is available on the 21st CCLC Web site at www.ed.gov/21stcclc/

The 21st CCLC Program encourages collaboration between schools and community-based organizations. Many districts leverage resources and link funding streams to extend CCLC Program offerings into the summer months. This strategy allows schools to tailor their programs to meet local needs. Rural communities, for example, may have few community-based agencies available to enlist as rural program partners; however, school may serve as a hub of ser-vices for the community, making it a natural site to locate summer programs. Urban schools may have a wealth of potential community partners, but also families who are not being reached by existing organizations because of language barriers or cultural factors.

Harris Cooper of the University of Missouri-Columbia is one of the few researchers who has taken a serious look at summer school. He predicts the increased demand that began a decade ago will continue for several reasons, including:

- A shift in family dynamics, with more single-parent families and more working parents in need of child care during the summer months than in years past

- Concern among policymakers about global economic competitiveness and the need for an educated workforce for the future

- Emphasis on higher academic standards nationwide

- Growing concern about the achievement gap and resulting efforts to raise achievement among children from less-advantaged backgrounds (Cooper, 2001)

In particular, research about summer learning loss has prompted many schools to seek ways to halt the slide in students' skills or knowledge during the traditional vacation months. In a meta-analysis of 93 summer school evaluations, Cooper and his colleagues found that students lost the equivalent of a month of instruction during their summer hiatus from school (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996). In practice, this means teachers must spend the first month of the school year "reviewing" material covered during the previous school year.

Researchers have found that this "summer slide" is not equal for all subjects, nor for all learners. Learning losses are more pronounced for math facts and for spelling than for more conceptual areas, such as reading comprehension and problem solving (Cooper, 2001). And while children from middle-class families show gains on reading achievement during the summer, children from lower-income families tend to lose ground on reading (Cooper).

The U.S. Department of Education explains the pattern this way:

> Children of the middle class appear to rely on school for only a portion of their academic learning. Their proficiency in basic and advanced academic subjects is boosted by parents' instruction, extracurricular activities (e.g., private lessons, voluntary associations

such as scouting or sports), and family activities that reinforce education even when they are construed as entertainment.

Children in poor families, on the other hand, rely primarily on school for academic learning (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, p. 2).

This reflects the long-term Beginning School Study, which has tracked Baltimore students from differing family backgrounds since 1982. Johns Hopkins University researchers Karl Alexander and Doris Entwisle suggest that summer learning differences, rather than differential school-year learning rates, explain the widening of the achievement gap as students progress from grade to grade. "For children in poverty, every summer meant a loss; for those not in poverty, every summer meant a gain" (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992, p. 82).

To elaborate on their findings about seasonal learning patterns, they offer what they call a "faucet theory":

> When school was in session, the resource faucet was turned on for all children, and all gained equally; when school was not in session, the school resource faucet was turned off. In summers, poor families could not make up for the resources the school had been providing, and so their children's achievement reached a plateau or even fell back. Middle-class families could make up for the school's resources to a considerable extent. ... Home resources matter mainly—or only—in summer (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001, p. 12).

What's more, the effects of summer school appear to vary according to students' family backgrounds. Middle class students are more likely than their less-advantaged peers to benefit from summer school. The disproportionate achievement effects may result from middle class families tapping additional resources to supplement the activities taking place in the classroom in ways that boost the impact of summer school (Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, & Muhlenbruck, 2000). Although higher family income provides easier access to resources—books, games, computers, trips, and so forth—money does not tell the whole story. Researchers also cite the importance of family expectations for achievement and attitudes toward learning as factors that relate to student achievement during the summer months (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001).

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUMMER PROGRAMS?

Summer school offerings vary widely, with targeted goals ranging from recreation to remediation to enrichment. Prevention of delinquent behavior—an explicit goal of the earliest summer programs organized nearly a century ago—remains "among summer school's latent, if not overt, functions" (Cooper, 2001, p. 3). Some summer programs target certain student populations, such as children from migrant families or English language learners.

The flavor of summer programs also varies widely. Some programs focus on addressing risks by solving or preventing problems, such as reducing dropout rates or eliminating social promotion. Others focus more on resiliency, building students' self-esteem and enhancing their attitude toward learning through enrichment activities, mentoring, supportive relationships, and leadership training (Denoya, 1998). Many programs, of course, have multiple purposes and goals.

Following are descriptions of some of the main types of summer programs.

Academic Programs

Academic summer school programs are currently in use by local districts to meet at least four specific learning goals (Cooper et al., 2000):

- To help students meet minimum competency requirements for graduation or grade-level promotion, such as the Summer Bridge program offered by Chicago Public Schools

- To allow high school students who have failed a course during the regular year a chance to retake the course
- To ensure that students with disabilities receive ongoing learning opportunities
- To offer educational programs for disadvantaged youth

The flexibility of summer programming also meets the academic needs of those students who are on an accelerated path toward graduation or who carry a heavy load of extracurricular activities during the regular school year (Cooper, 2001).

Two programs profiled in this booklet that have specific academic learning goals are the Mat-Su summer program emphasizing mathematics, and the Portland Public Schools CIM Summer Academy, which helps students meet grade-level standards.

Enrichment Programs

In addition, summer offers the opportunity for students to pursue specialized interests or to take learning deeper than is possible during the traditional school year. Enrichment programs are often conducted on college campuses or offered in the local community by science museums, art museums, performing arts organizations, and other groups. Some enrichment programs are designed to appeal to particular populations, such as students of color or girls, who are traditionally underrepresented in technical or scientific fields. Many such programs provide scholarships or financial assistance based on family need.

Enrichment programs provide opportunities for students to engage in activities that may not be available during the regular school year because of funding limitations. Such programs often focus on music, visual arts, performing arts, and sports and recreation.

The National Association for Gifted Children, in a guide for parents, recommends that summer enrichment programs provide a setting in which exploration and risk taking are encouraged, and where children receive support and encouragement as they try new activities and skills (Callahan, 1997).

Programs To Serve Special Populations

Some school districts support summer programs by combining funds that are earmarked to serve specific student populations, such as migrant students, English language learners, or students from high-poverty Title 1 schools. Programs also are available in some communities to keep young people engaged in positive activities and away from gang involvement or exposure to other risky behaviors. For example, Camp W.A.T.E.R., profiled in this booklet, focuses on science and cultural enrichment geared toward Alaska Native students.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Programs funded by 21st Century Community Learning Center grants involve collaboration between schools and community-based organizations and agencies with a long history of providing programs for young people. The resulting partnerships typically offer a combination of programming to contribute to students' academic, social, and emotional development. This holistic approach focuses on

the needs of the whole child through such approaches as experiential learning, individualized instruction, mentoring, and development of positive social skills. In general, such programs focus on providing positive activities for youth in a safe and secure environment. Mary Walker and Inchelium schools are two 21st CCLC grant-funded programs profiled in this booklet. They focus on students in rural communities, and Inchelium serves predominantly Native American students.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF SUMMER SCHOOL?

Although summer school is hardly a panacea for overcoming challenges such as the achievement gap, research shows that it can boost student learning in specific areas. For students who need more time to meet learning goals—whether because of class time lost due to illness or family mobility, issues related to learning English as a second language, or individual learning style—summer offers the benefit of a longer calendar. For gifted students or those with a keen interest in a particular subject, summer offers the chance to explore a subject in more depth than the regular school year may allow.

The climate of summer school also seems to have an effect on student learning. Compared to the traditional school year, summer programs often feature smaller classes, more individualized instruction, and a more relaxed learning atmosphere. The experience of success during a summer session can boost students' confidence as learners for the long term.

Among key findings of recent research on summer school:

- Programs that focus on lessening or removing learning deficiencies have a positive effect on the knowledge and skills of students
- Programs that focus on accelerating learning have a positive effect on students
- Programs that provide small-group or individualized instruction produce the largest impact on student learning

- Programs that require some form of parent involvement produce larger effects than programs without this component (Cooper et al., 2000; Cooper, 2001)

In particular, research suggests that programs designed for the earliest grades and for students from less-advantaged families promise to help close the achievement gap (Borman, 2000; Cooper, 2001; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001). Geoffrey Borman, commenting on the meta-analysis of Cooper and associates, suggests:

> Summer school may be the primary intervention through which educators prevent the cumulative widening of the reading achievement gap (Borman, 2000, p. 24).

Research about the summer slide shows that all students, regardless of resources at home, tend to lose math skills during the summer; in reading skills, disadvantaged children tend to experience summer losses while middle class students show achievement gains (Cooper et al., 1996). This leads Cooper to conclude: For all students, a primary focus on mathematics instruction in the summer would seem to be needed the most. If programs had the explicit purpose of lessening inequities across income groups, then a focus on summer reading instruction for disadvantaged students would be most beneficial (Cooper, 2001, p. 3).

Some researchers suggest targeting summer instruction to the early primary grades, and designing programs especially for students from low-income backgrounds (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001). Indeed, in analyzing research on the summer slide, Borman suggests that if the goal of sum-

mer school is to prevent seasonal learning losses, "it makes little sense to begin mandating summer school only after students have fallen behind in their regular school year work" (Borman, 2000, p. 125).

In particular, Chicago's Summer Bridge program has shown promise as a "second chance" for students who have failed to pass a state-mandated assessment test for grade promotion. Research shows that participation in the summer program, which is tied closely to the regular school year curriculum, provides students with at least a short-term gain in standardized test scores (Roderick, Bryk, Jacob, Easton, & Allensworth, 1999).

WHAT STRATEGIES ARE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR DELIVERING SUMMER INSTRUCTION?

Despite the recent growth in popularity, summer school programs enroll only about a tenth of the nation's schoolchildren. This smaller scale may work to students' advantage, yielding smaller class sizes, more individualized instruction, and greater flexibility for teachers to meet specific learning needs. Indeed, Cooper (2001) has found that small-group or individualized instruction during the summer produces the greatest benefits for student learning. Students who are at risk of academic failure may benefit from flexible summer programs. In a remedial summer program in Warrensburg, Missouri, students could contract to pursue independent learning goals, with teachers acting as resource persons. The mastery learning model and flexible scheduling allowed students to plan attendance around vacation and work schedules (Cale, 1992).

Effective summer and extended learning programs tend to share common features, including (Borman, 2000; Funkhouser, Fiester, O'Brien, & Weimer, 1995):

- Parent and community involvement
- Careful attention to program fidelity
- Substantial academic components aimed at teaching reading and math
- Coordination with learning goals and activities of the regular school year
- Cultural sensitivity
- Staff development
- Evaluation of program success

In their long-term study of children of diverse backgrounds, Baltimore researchers found that children from more advantaged families "did things in summer different from what they did during the school year—they attended day camps, took swimming lessons, went on trips, visited local parks and zoos, and played organized sports, to name a few" (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001, p. 15). Effective summer programs can be designed to emulate such positive summer experiences by incorporating these strategies (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson):

- Encouraging positive behavior
- Teaching problem-solving strategies
- Encouraging children to be self-directed learners
- Setting high expectations
- Providing necessary support so that children can meet expectations

Because children naturally equate the long days of summer with being outdoors and being active, effective programs incorporate physical activity and field trips into classroom work, balancing instructional and noninstructional time to keep students engaged (Denoya, 1998; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001). Physical activity not only provides a break from more sedentary classwork, but also provides health benefits—especially for students who may spend their leisure time in front of television sets or computer screens.

Research from the related field of out-of-school time, including after-school and extended-day programs, suggests that effective programs also provide an opportunity to strengthen connections between students' school and home lives (Pederson, de Kanter, Bob, Weinig, & Noeth, 1998). A large-scale extended learning program called LA's BEST, which has tracked improvements in attendance, achieve-

ment, and grades for its low-income student participants, uses three strategies to guide programming: building on what students already know (rather than using a preset curriculum), helping students value their own ideas and experiences, and following students' interests when planning activities (Heckman & Sanger, 2001).

The research on out-of-school time programs also stresses the importance of providing students with a safe environment and giving them opportunities to develop relationships with caring, competent adults (Pederson et al., 1998). Effective after-school programs frequently offer students a choice of activities, provide individualized instruction, and create opportunities for experiential learning. These may be effective strategies for engaging students in summer learning, as well.

Although many questions remain about the most effective approaches for summer instruction—including the optimum program length—certain strategies are indicated by existing research. Especially if the goal is to prevent summer learning loss, an effective program design will (Borman, 2000):

- Begin in the early grades
- Be offered over multiple summers
- Focus on prevention and development rather than remediation

When the summer goal is remediation—such as the mandatory programs many urban districts now provide for students who have failed to pass high-stakes tests—strategies to boost student results include staff time for collaborative planning and the use of certified teachers for summer staffing. A study of New York City's summer school program

recommended a number of strategies relating to teachers (Metis, 2002):

- Begin teacher recruitment early
- Differentiate professional development based on teacher background
- Increase the number of professional development days for teachers
- Develop compact curriculum guides, including pacing charts
- Create more continuity between the regular school year and the summer school program

In addition, Minneapolis Public Schools draws on experience to recommend these strategies for building a successful summer program:

- Clearly communicate summer session goals and student responsibilities
- Provide a rigorous curriculum that helps students meet individualized learning goals and state standards
- Provide meaningful, ongoing home communication regarding student attendance, behavior, and progress (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2002)

WHAT CHALLENGES DOES SUMMER SCHOOL POSE?

Compared to the regular school year, summer programs often are designed on a short timeline. Because of budget uncertainty, many districts must wait until the eleventh hour to begin planning course content and making arrangements for staffing. A late start tends to cut short planning time for teachers and can result in course materials arriving late—two commonly cited impediments to program success (Cooper, 2001).

In addition, if summer school is designed to feel like "more of the same" to students who have just completed a regular school year, they may respond with spotty attendance or low motivation. If attendance is optional, programs may encounter high attrition and absentee rates (Cooper et al., 2000). On the other hand, if summer school attendance is mandatory for students who have failed to meet standards or satisfy course requirements, it can feel like punishment (Ediger, 2001).

An earlier review of summer programs for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education cited these potential pitfalls (Ascher, 1988):

- Short program duration
- Loose organization
- Little time for advanced planning
- Low academic expectations
- Discontinuity between summer and regular school year curriculum
- Instructional time wasted as new teachers got to know summer students
- Teacher fatigue
- Poor student attendance

Districts that make summer school mandatory for struggling students may find that the program does not result in lasting gains. The short-term test score gains of students participating in Chicago's Summer Bridge program did not carry over to long-term improvements in achievement among students considered at risk for retention (Roderick et al., 1999).

What's more, a program that does not deliver improvements in student achievement may be branded a failure—even though it may well succeed in preventing summer learning loss (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992).

Providing funding for summer programs is an ongoing concern. Program planners may have to search for funding in creative ways, including grant writing, merging funding from several resource streams, and soliciting support from community partners and private sources.

Developing school-community partnerships can be an effective way to expand available resources, broaden the expertise of program staff, and create programs that are a better fit for the local community. However, partners may face challenges as they integrate diverse backgrounds and blend institutional cultures. Effective programs that endure over the long term find ways to resolve conflicts and overcome obstacles (Funkhouser et al., 1995).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNERS AND COORDINATORS

Setting clear goals for summer school and allowing adequate planning time can help to alleviate the most common program challenges.

Funding Challenge

Funding is a major roadblock to creating and sustaining summer school programs in many communities. Communities may be able to overcome this challenge by drawing on a variety of funding sources for summer school. Districts may be able to tap funding streams for programs such as Title I, 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants, migrant education funds, and private foundation support. See the Resources section for links to grant opportunities.

In addition, the No Child Left Behind Act requires districts to fund supplemental educational services for students in low-income families attending Title I schools that are in their second year of improvement (USDOE, 2002). These services can include academic assistance such as tutoring, remediation, and other educational interventions, and must occur outside the regular school day. *For more information about these services, see the Supplemental Educational Services Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, Title I, Section 1116(e) at* www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SASA/suppsvcsguid.doc.

Other Implications

Research on summer school suggests other implications for program planners and coordinators, including these:

- **Define summer learning goals.** If policymakers are most concerned about stemming summer learning losses, especially for less-advantaged children, they must consider research findings carefully. Summer learning losses in math do not mean that summer programs focusing on literacy are without value; summer school can have positive effects on reading as well as math (Cooper, 2001).

- **Consider ways to integrate summer offerings with the regular school year curriculum** (Borman, 2000). Hiring teachers from the regular program to teach summer school can be an effective strategy for maintaining continuity.

- **Connect children with community resources for expanding their summer learning opportunities.** A number of organizations offer positive, well-designed summer experiences for school-aged children; many offer scholarships based on family need. Consider organizing a summer program fair to help families become aware of the summer options and help program providers connect with local families. Don't overlook local libraries as resources for boosting children's summer interest in reading.

- **Encourage parent involvement in summer school.** Research shows parent involvement to be a factor in children's success (Cooper et al., 2000). Because many parents work during the day, consider holding an evening open house to outline program expectations. Provide opportuni-

ties for parents to be involved in their children's summer learning.

- **Encourage participation by students from less-advantaged families; provide transportation to and from summer programs and food service at the program site**. Some programs make arrangements for siblings to attend summer programs at the same location to ease logistics for families.

- **Provide culturally appropriate programming that meets local needs and fits the community context.**

- **Involve students in program planning**. Consider recruiting a student advisory committee to provide feedback about program offerings that students consider to be of interest.

- **Plan for evaluation of program outcomes**, and draw from evaluation results to adjust future programming and provide continuity from year to year.

- **Integrate staff development activities into summer instruction**. Small classes and the more relaxed atmosphere of summer sessions make it an opportune setting for teachers to experiment with new teaching strategies and course materials (Cooper, 2001).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS

Just as parents play an important role in their children's education during the traditional school year, they continue to be a key factor during the summer months.

Parents can increase the odds of their children having a positive summer school experience by taking an active role themselves. Setting high expectations for regular attendance and participation can help their children succeed.

In addition, parents can look to community resources to expand on summer learning opportunities for their children. Such opportunities do not have to be expensive. Parents can help children maintain literacy skills by taking them on regular trips to the library and reading together at home. Similarly, parents can look for ways to encourage the use of math in day-to-day activities to prevent summer learning loss. Summer also can be a time to encourage students to pursue individual interests. Special-interest summer programs may offer scholarships based on family need.

Parents should consider their child's needs, interests, and abilities when making the decision to enroll their child in a summer program. If parents decide summer school is the right option, they may want to ask these questions of summer school providers to determine if the program is a good fit for their child:

- **What is the primary focus of the program**—academics, recreation, enrichment, community service, social skill development, or a combination? Is this focus a good fit for your child's interests?

- **Does the program provide effective teaching strategies**, such as individualized and small-group instruction, hands-on learning experiences, or choices of activities? Who are the teachers, and how have they been trained to work with your student?

- **How does the program accommodate students' learning styles?**

- **What are the expectations for families (e.g., transportation, homework support, other resources)?** Have you talked with other families whose children have participated in the program in previous years?

- **Is the summer program coordinated with the regular school-year curriculum?**

The National Association for Gifted Children offers two articles to guide parents in choosing summer school programs and summer camps as well as a list of summer enrichment programs from around the country (www.nagc.org/summer/intro.html).

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community-based organizations play an important role in providing positive experiences for students during the summer months. Many youth-serving organizations have a long history of providing seasonal recreation activities for children and teens. As school districts become more purposeful about harnessing summer learning opportunities, community organizations have an opportunity to play a new role as summer school partners.

Although collaboration can offer powerful benefits to students and communities, partnering organizations often face challenges as they attempt to blend with the culture of the school. Community partners may want to consider the following issues:

- **Are the goals of the summer program clearly defined and shared by partner organizations?** School district staff may want to focus summer programming on meeting the learning needs of students who are behind grade level or boosting achievement test scores. Community-based organizations may be focused more on meeting the emotional and development needs of children and youth. Setting clear goals can alleviate confusion or friction. Regular and open communication between partner organizations is another effective strategy for program success.

- **What will partners contribute to summer programming?** Thoughtful planning will articulate the roles of each organization and draw on the strengths each partner has to offer. For example, a school district might provide

curriculum materials and oversee selection and training of academic teaching staff. An organization with expertise in youth development may provide staff for mentoring or building positive student attitudes toward learning. An organization that specializes in science or the arts may provide hands-on learning experiences in areas of interest.

- **How can community partners help to engage parents?** Support from parents is a key to summer school success. Community-based organizations may have strong ties to local families and specific populations and cultural groups. Organizations might encourage family participation by hosting a potluck or open house to inform parents about summer learning opportunities, or organizing an end-of-summer celebration to showcase student success. Community organizations may be able to use their newsletters or other means of communicating with families to share information about summer offerings.

CONCLUSION

Summer is a special time in the life of a child. Those long daylight hours, free of the regular school-year demands, can open up opportunities for family travel, leisure, and warm-weather recreation. Learning fits into this sunny picture, of course, whether it's through informal outings, leisure reading, or time to explore special interests.

For many children, summer also offers time to pursue more formal learning opportunities. Although summer school is not for everyone, it is an increasingly popular option for several reasons. Working families need safe places for their children to be when school is not in session. Students who are struggling to meet standards during the regular academic year can benefit from summer school, especially if it's designed to take advantage of effective teaching strategies. Students with a specialized interest, such as the arts or technology, can take learning deeper during summer enrichment programs.

Many questions about the most effective use and organization of summer school are still being explored by researchers. Promising practices are emerging from recent studies, however, and can guide development of effective programs.

Funding summer programming may require creative thinking by local schools and communities. In many locales, collaboration between schools and community-based organizations is providing the means to stretch local resources so that summer is an effective, engaging season of learning.

NORTHWEST SAMPLER

The following pages describe several summer school programs in the Northwest. Although each program has a different focus, they all strive to provide enriching learning experiences through a combination of academics, projects, field trips, and fun.

The programs share several keys to success mentioned in this booklet:

- Small-group instruction
- Individualized and self-directed learning
- Project-based learning
- Parent and community involvement
- Academic components tied to mathematics and reading
- Coordination with learning goals and activities of the regular school year
- Cultural sensitivity
- Staff development
- Evaluation of program goals

Many of these programs were recommended to NWREL by grant coordinators and state and local Title I staff members. Although NWREL did not evaluate these programs, most have been or are being evaluated by district staff, external evaluators, or program evaluators (21st CCLC grant-funded programs require evaluations). Some CCLC schools have initial data showing evidence of success in relation to their stated goals; other programs are in the process of collecting and evaluating their data. Staff members have offered observations of their program's outcomes.

We encourage you to contact the program directors for additional information.

PROGRAM

Camp W.A.T.E.R.
Juneau School District
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, Alaska 99801

CONTACT

Peggy Cowan, Assistant Superintendent
Juneau School District
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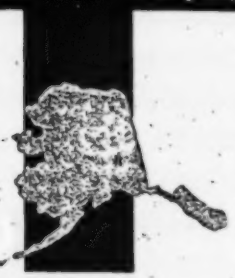
Information for this profile was compiled from a grant abstract, interviews, and from the Camp W.A.T.E.R. Performance Report (Calkins, 2002)

Camp W.A.T.E.R. at a glance:

- Middle school
- Wilderness exploration
- Adventure
- Tradition (Tlingit)
- Exploration
- Research (math and science projects, and Native Ways of Knowing)

BACKGROUND

Camp W.A.T.E.R. is a summer math/science camp for middle school students sponsored by the Juneau School District in partnership with L'Koot Kwaan-Chilkoot Culture Camp.



In operation for five years, the program has been primarily grant-funded; the 2002 program was funded with the first of a five-year National Science Federation Equity grant. There is no charge for participants.

Thirty-five to 40 campers spend three and a half weeks learning mathematics and science skills through two perspectives—modern scientific methodology and traditional ways of knowing from Tlingit elders. The camp's four objectives are:

- To strengthen student commitment, particularly Alaska Native students' commitment to stay in school and enroll – in math and science courses
- To teach participants natural science and mathematics topics through data collection and analysis and illustrate the importance of math and science in their daily lives
- To model and exemplify the connections between Alaska Native traditional knowledge and western ways of knowing
- To emphasize career exploration and introduce resource management and other science and mathematics careers as career options

Criteria for acceptance into the camp have been developed based on teacher recommendations, student interest, and mathematics and science performance. In an application, the students answer questions about their prior experience in camps and interest in science; complete a mathematics "site" problem to determine basic math skills; and write an essay explaining why they want to attend camp and their goals for learning.

A teacher recommendation form is completed by a mathematics or science teacher, or by an Indian Studies/Cultural Resource Specialist. The form asks about the student's abili-

ties in math, written and oral communication, leadership, working with others in groups, and other abilities relating to social maturity and common sense.

PROGRAMMING

The first week is an orientation to Native Ways of Knowing, science, outdoor survival, and group-building activities. During this week students gain an understanding of the scientific method and choose a topic for their sustained investigations. In previous years, all the students participated in the same project—collecting water samples and using laboratory instruments to analyze the data. After receiving feedback from staff and campers, it was decided to use the previous year's study as a model for demonstrating the scientific method, and to have the children choose their own topic of interest. A sampling of some of last year's projects includes:

- Traditional vs. commercial bug repellents
- Breaking strengths of wood
- Antibacterial properties of plants
- Comparing speed with numbers of paddlers in a canoe

During this week students interview nine scientists from the National Marine Fisheries Laboratory, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These scientists also helped students develop their science projects and provide helpful feedback in one-on-one interactions.

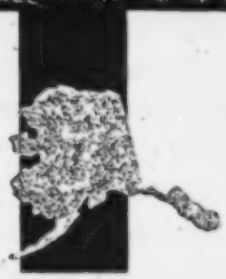
The children next go to a traditional Alaska Native culture camp, L'Koot Kwaan, near Haines, a five-hour ferry ride from Juneau. Each day starts with science mini-investigations, then a Native song/language instruction and ends with a Native

story. During the day students rotate between science, which starts with direct instruction and ends with doing their own project, with visits by scientists and Elders on alternating days.

The children are mentored and taught Native Ways of Knowing by local Elders. One year, Walter Soboloff, a 94-year-old local Elder worked with the children. Each day starts with science investigations, then a Native song or language instruction, and ends with a Native story. During the day students have direct science instruction lessons and work on their science projects, with scientists and Elders visiting on alternating days. The children learn much about the Tlingit culture including how Tlingit people created art, hunted, fished, and lived. Stories and legends are told around the campfire; children hike and learn the history of Tlingit clans living in the area; and learn Tlingit math, a series of activities incorporating Tlingit art and culture with mathematical facts and concepts. They are taught how to maintain the health of streams and rivers, and how to care for the natural world. In addition to Elders, camp staff, and teachers, there is a small crew of high school counselors, many of whom attended the camp as children.

Campers then travel to Admiralty Island, a wilderness location in the Tongass National Forest. Here students do hands-on scientific experiments, explore life on the water via canoe, and begin to understand more of the local and regional natural history.

During the last week students publish their scientific findings, further interview scientists, prepare and present a multimedia display of their camp experiences, and set personal goals for the next year. A final potlatch, to which parents and families, scientists, and Elders are invited, is the culminating event of



the summer. After Camp W.A.T.E.R. ends, students work with scientists and Elders on self-selected science projects and prepare entries for the Southeast Native Science Fair.

Community and Family Involvement

Native Elders and local scientists were teachers and mentors for the students throughout the program. The program is truly a community event: more than 85 parents, family members, and community members attended the potlatch and presentation of projects. Parents were asked to evaluate the program. Here are some of their comments:

- Camp W.A.T.E.R. gave my son more confidence and from what he says, he learned a lot.
- Observing sea life at Mitchell Bay was an area that interested her very much.
- She is very enthusiastic about the whole Camp W.A.T.E.R.—activities, travel, etc.—everything she learned and explored. She talks non-stop! (Calkins, p. 9).

Evaluation and Outcomes

Camp W.A.T.E.R. was evaluated by an external evaluator in the year following the 2001 summer camp. The report looked at the goals for the program and evaluated the status of progress toward the goals.

The children were asked to share two things they learned about science and science investigations. The variety of answers helped evaluate the degree to which the campers focused on the science goals of the camp and to the degree which they were aware of science and math in their everyday life at camp:

- Alder leaves are a good source to repel bugs ... It works better than commercial bug dope
- How to tell what sex a crab is
- We learned how fast the river flows in culture camp
- For my science investigation I learned that the hardest part is the background and the procedure

Perhaps the most revealing parts of the evaluation report are the case studies that look at the impact the program has had on certain students. The students and their teachers are interviewed at the end of the first semester after they attended Camp W.A.T.E.R. According to the teachers and the student himself, one boy became much more motivated in school and made greater progress in mathematics and science achievement. He also gained confidence and learned more cooperation skills working with others. In the sixth grade he had a C plus in science and an F in math. By eighth grade, after he attended the camp, he had a B in science and a C- in math. The boy reported that his Camp W.A.T.E.R. project on firefighting "changed the way I thinks about my future." He states "Math has always been my worst class, all my life, except when I can use it like I did here."

The report sums up the evaluation with the comment that "the projects met the overall goal for greater student ownership and long-lasting effects—students wrote with more detailed knowledge of and pride about their projects than they did about other components of the camp." (p. 1). These projects, which received widespread publicity in the community "helped bolster support for increased culturally appropriate, place-based learning activities for Native students" (p. 1).

Program

Math Matters in Mat-Su Summer School (K–12)
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
125 W. Evergreen
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Contact

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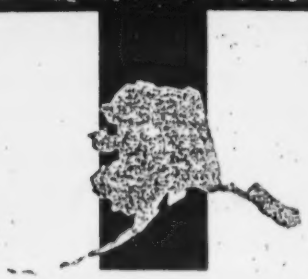
This program was recommended to NWREL by a 21st CCLC grant program officer at Alaska Department of Early Childhood Education because it motivates students in mathematics, focuses on students who have been identified as needing help, and provides time for teachers to learn ways to respond to the individual needs of these children.

Math Matters at a glance:

- K–12
- Rural
- Multiage, mixed-ability grouping
- Intensive mathematics instruction featuring hands-on learning
- Professional development component for teachers
- Family participation

Background

Math Matters in Mat-Su is an intensive mathematics instruction program for K–12 students. Although the program is designed for students who need improvement on the math



portion of the high school graduation qualifying or benchmark exams, the program is open to any student.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District is the third largest district in Alaska, with a total enrollment of 12,600 students. The district headquarters in Palmer is 50 miles north of Anchorage; the district spans 24,502 square miles.

The program began in 1999, as a response to students' low scores in mathematics on a spring assessment. The goal is to help students achieve better math results on the benchmark exams or the high school graduation qualifying exam. The program focuses on areas of the test where student performance was weakest. For the 2002 program, the focus was geometry. Sixteen hundred students were eligible to attend summer school based on the test results.

The program is currently financed through a combination of a Quality Schools Learning Opportunity grant and Title I funds. Except for a $10 administration fee, the program is free to participants.

Programming

The program operates in two middle schools. Each site has a program coordinator, secretary, nurse, and custodian. Last year 125 high school students, 330 K–2 students, 360 3–5 students, and 330 6–8 students participated in the program. Two teachers team-teach a class of 30 students. The students are grouped in multiage, mixed-ability groups. School is in session from 8:30 to noon. From 1:00 to 3:30, teachers meet as primary, intermediate, middle, and high school groups with their team leaders to share lessons, receive instruction, and

schedule. The teachers then spend the remainder of the afternoon with their team-teacher planning for the next day. Professional development workshops are also offered on topics such as implementing specific math curricula, cooperative learning, using manipulatives to effectively teach concepts, orienteering, and cognitive guided instruction.

Twelve teachers from the district are part of the summer school planning team. These teachers represent all K–12 schools and have experience working with special education, gifted, and alternative programs. Last year, the planning team met once a week for 10 weeks prior to the beginning of summer school. The staff also met for two days prior to the start of classes.

Program Director Mardene Collins uses a model of professional development in which she builds leadership capacity within the summer school staff, and utilizes the staff's expertise. This, she says, creates a learning community for both teachers and students, with new learning opportunities for all.

Collins notes that because many of the teachers were experiencing new things last year—team teaching, multiage classrooms, mixed-ability groupings, alternative assessments, journaling, and portfolios—they would need support and much time for planning and designing the curriculum. Two nationally known experts in mathematics spent two weeks with the teachers modeling activities that "helped build a conceptual understanding of functions and relationships." The teachers also had the opportunity to pilot three elementary mathematics programs during the summer.

The curricular focus for the summer of 2002 was geometry. The expectations for student learning are based on the per-

formance standards for each age group. For example, there is an expectation for grades K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12 that involves transformation/symmetry, and spatial reasoning.

The planning team designed hand-on projects and lessons that would teach and reinforce the theme of functions and relationships. Later in the summer, the teachers planned their own lessons. The students learn how to use geometry software appropriate for their grade level. They build a two- or three-dimensional structure that teaches a geometrical concept appropriate to their grade.

Students learn orienteering skills and participate in outdoor geometry activities. Teachers also integrate art and geometry with coaching from an art teacher. Literature that incorporates mathematical concepts is integrated into the lessons as well.

Parents were involved with the program from the start. Before the program began, families were invited to information meetings to learn more about the program, given expectations and outcomes, and shown a video that explained the program's approach. On Fridays, the program held "Family Math Mornings" in which families could join the class. Students share with their families and each other what they have learned at a Math Fair/Open House. A final project can be a student-led portfolio conference, a geometrical structure, a software geometry project, or other demonstrations of learning.

Evaluation and Outcomes

Students are given a pre- and posttest of certain learning objectives. Initial evaluation is being done through student

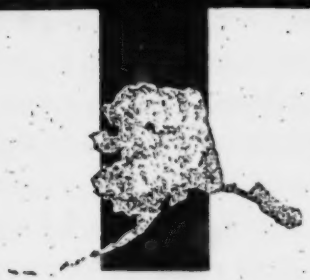
and teacher journals and surveys, parent surveys, planning team input, and on-site administrator feedback.

Surveys from the middle school students indicated that their attitude toward mathematics has changed considerably. Collins says the program has "really impacted how students view mathematics. Middle school seems to be a time where students decide if they like mathematics and this affects their learning and motivation to learn it." The parent survey was also very positive. Two hundred fifty-one surveys were returned, with only eight indicating expectations for their child's learning were not met.

Collins indicated that a powerful outcome of the program was the teacher teaming. For the first few days, many teachers were uncomfortable with teaming, and felt a lack of structure. However, by the fourth day, teachers were indicating in their journals that they appreciated the power of working with a partner, planning together, and having in-depth conversations about the teaching and learning of mathematics.

The program has had a significant impact on the community, says Collins. Teachers, parents, and community members all want to know if the program will be offered again.

Collins hopes to use the planning team as teacher leaders to facilitate professional development during the school year and to capture and maintain the energy of the summer school teachers.



Planned Adjustments

Collins indicates that certain changes will be made for the second year of the program, such as making attendance requirements clearer for students and parents; clarifying for students reasons why they would want to enroll; providing clearer expectations for teachers; providing more planning time for teachers; and offering more professional development workshops for teachers in the afternoon.

Program

LINKS for Learning
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Contact

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LINKS for Learning at a glance:

- Elementary and middle school
- Rural
- Small-group learning
- Hands-on activities

Background

In June 1999, the Livingston School District received a three-year 21st CCLC grant to provide safe, supervised after-school and summer activities for elementary and middle school students. A low student-to-staff ratio permits individualized attention, small-group interactions, explorations, and hands-on activities. LINKS strives to increase community involvement in the schools and expand the role of schools in the community.

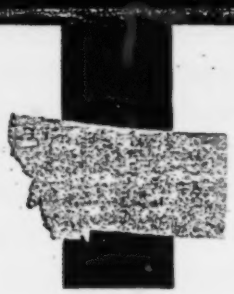
The goal of the summer program, says coordinator Julie Hancock, is for children to be exposed to new ideas and to new ways of learning. The first year of the program students spent 50 minutes each in structured mathematics, reading, and physical activities. The concern was that this structure

was not inherently motivating to children, and the structure and content were very similar to a regular school day. After reviewing program goals with the LINKS advisory board, it was decided that future summer programs would incorporate language arts and math skills in daily explorations of a particular topic. The elementary and middle school programs were structured differently to reflect and meet the needs of the different age groups. Outdoor and environmental education has now been the focus of the program for the past three years.

PROGRAMMING

The three-hour day begins with a nutritious breakfast. Families are invited to join their children for breakfast. Middle school children spend the rest of the morning in a mini-class choosing from a list of 10 topics, while the elementary students work in small groups exploring a topic. These topics include art, drama, space and flight, outdoor recreation, and Native American studies. Reading, mathematics, art, and science are all incorporated into the day's explorations. Physical activity is included in the morning as well.

The program is open to all Livingston area students. While there is a 30 dollar enrollment fee (which includes breakfast and transportation for two weeks), the fee is waived for children on the free and reduced-price lunch. No one is turned away because of cost. A goal of the LINKS summer program is to include students most in need of academic support, enriching experiences, and a safe, supervised environment. Classroom teachers, building principals, and mental health care providers refer students who most need such support to the program.



Staffing choices are critical for this kind of learning experience. Hiring teachers "who can connect with children and develop enriching activities" is very important, says Hancock. "Summer staff qualifications must include enthusiasm, willingess to learn from the students, and an ability to play." Combined with these qualities, summer staff must also be well-organized, able to manage student behavior and be flexible. "We have been fortunate in the LINKS program to have staff with all these qualities and more."

Outcomes

The program has now operated for four years. Many of the teachers have been involved from the beginning. A very important outcome of summer programs is having children enjoy learning. A key to success has been the focus on outdoor education, which has created an exciting learning environment for students and staff. Through the outdoor activities, "we have been able to create a climate very different from the regular school day." Says Hancock,

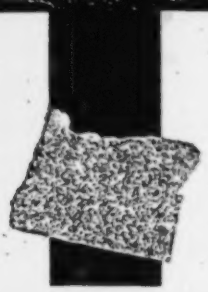
> We had several reluctant participants this past summer who begged their parents to sign them up for the next session. Having young children find pleasure in learning, read for meaning and cooperate with peers in the classroom is a primary goal of the LINKS program. We do know that all children involved in the program listen to books, read for meaning, and engage in math activities for at least ten and often twenty mornings during the summer. Knowing that reading books has been shown to reduce summer learning losses we hope to send children more ready for school in the fall. We will be monitoring reading fluency and

comprehension scores of summer participants over the next year as well as standardized tests and performance in school. Our hope is that we will reduce summer learning losses, especially those exaggerated losses found among low-income students.

LINKS' biggest challenge will be ongoing funding. Charging fees is a viable source of funding for the future; however, in order to equally include all students a large scholarship base will need to be developed, says Hancock.

Planned Adjustments

Every summer has taught new lessons that drive changes for future summers. Says Hancock, "Next summer I would like to build in short staff get-togethers each week. We were informally meeting many days, however, scheduled time would make those meetings more relaxed and productive. We found that coordinated planning saved everyone time and allowed us to create some whole-group events that gave the program a more 'camp' like atmosphere."



Program

McKinley/Elmonica Elementary Summer School
1500 N.W. 185th Ave.
Beaverton, OR 97006

Contact

Ben Keefer, Summer School Coordinator
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ben_keefer@beavton.k12.or.us

This program was recommended by the district's Title I coordinator as an effective program for motivating students not meeting benchmarks. Jennifer Railsback visited this program in July 2002.

McKinley and Elmonica at a glance:

- Grades 3-6
- Suburban
- Focus on interdisciplinary, project-based learning, and scientific inquiry

Young archaeologists intently sift through the sands of a river floodplain to find skeletal remains. " I found a skull!" shouts one student jubilantly. In a local wetland, other amateur scientists make observations of plant and water life, obtain plant samples, and consult their field guides to determine what they found. "I wonder what dug up those holes," muses a young botanist, "a snake?" After fieldwork, the groups return to their classroom to record their findings and experiences in field journals. Some draw pictures of what they found.

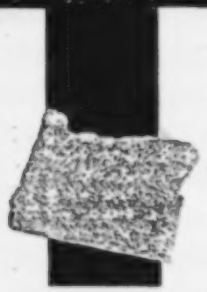
No, these aren't university science students; they are third- through sixth-graders engaged in summer projects of scientific inquiry and exploration. Sure, the riverbed is actually a sand pit in the schoolyard, but the exploration is exciting regardless of the location.

Background

The goal of this summer school program is to provide extended learning for students in two Title I schoolwide schools who are not meeting or barely meeting benchmarks. In the spring, all students who are not meeting benchmarks are invited to participate. The focus is on project-based learning, which research has shown to increase student engagement in learning. "In past summer programs," says Keefer, "when we used primarily drill-based programs to teach reading and math, we struggled to keep the children interested." Attendance was spotty as well. This year the summer program is very different.

The program runs four hours a day for five weeks. McKinley's third- through sixth-graders joined students from Elmonica Elementary school this summer, for a total of 100 students with seven teachers and other staff members. Each class has at least one teacher and teaching assistant. Keefer leads activities with the teachers, enthusiastically guiding the kids in their own exploration. "We try to allow time for the children to ask as many questions as possible, which is important for the scientific inquiry process," he says.

Children choose a thematic group for the five weeks: Cycles (plants and animals); Human Environments; Paleoecological Studies; or Wetlands. The kids then work in these multiage

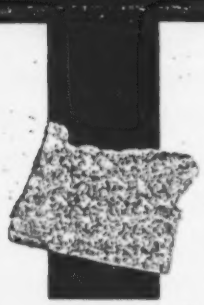


groups on a project of their own choosing. The course of study is modeled on how scientists work on projects—no lesson is learned in isolation.

"We know these kids are struggling [during the school year] and our goal is to get their excitement level way up," comments Reefer. The other teachers agree. "I've seen that many kids here are willing to put forth effort that they didn't during the previous school year," says one. The teachers agree that small class size (15 at the most), the attention teachers give to their students, the chance for the children to explore their surroundings and learn things they can apply to their lives all contribute to this high level of interest.

Programming

The first half-hour of the morning is an "instructional warm-up," during which kids work on mathematics skills worksheets and can get help in specific areas. For the rest of the day, reading and mathematics are incorporated as much into the project themes as possible. For each theme, such as wetlands, fiction and nonfiction books related to the theme are selected and leveled, grouped and ready for each child. Throughout the classrooms, evidence of children's writing is posted all over the walls. The "sentence strip," where children can post sentences on a subject is a way children can work on writing together. The teachers have guided reading groups and all children have journals. The goal is to have children reading and writing as much as possible about what interests them. Technology learning is also integrated into the projects. The children use I-Books received from a grant to collect and record data.



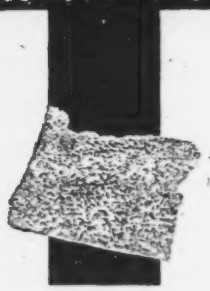
Summer school teachers and principals are very excited about this program. The teachers are already experienced in inquiry-based learning and incorporate it into their regular classes, so they are not daunted by the open-ended curriculum. "Teachers are acting as facilitators of learning rather than instructors," says McKinley Principal Patricia Book. The teachers also say that they can go into certain issues much more in depth in the summer, and focus on individualized instruction. "Kids are more relaxed about learning and also have more energy, especially since they don't have to worry about taking many tests," says one teacher. Comments another: "Many parents are actually surprised to see that their children are really enjoying summer school!"

The teachers are also eager to apply their projects and themes in the next school year. The thematic learning concept will be applied to the after-school program, which will have projects such as a Green Thumb gardening club. The students who become experts in the summer on wetlands and archaeology will form an after-school club to mentor other students in what they learned.

Even though the teachers' excitement is high with this program, there are still challenges. "Probably the most challenging thing," reflects Keefer, "is finding enough subject-specific reading material on the specific project themes that are at an appropriate level for this age group." For example, there aren't very many specific books for third-graders on paleoecology. So Keefer and other teachers adapt materials themselves. For example, they adapted an adult field guide into a format and reading level for younger children.

Evaluation and Outcomes

Data are currently being compiled to look at the effectiveness of this program. It is evident to the teachers, parents, and staff that the children love learning in this program, as they have perhaps never enjoyed learning before. The attendance rate is very high for the program, and the discipline rate very low. Many of these kids who have had disciplinary issues in the past do not have them in the summer program. "The key is for us to focus on what interests kids, incorporating scientific inquiry, reading, and math skills into highly engaging, interactive projects," emphasizes Book.



Program

Portland Public Schools Certificate of Initial Mastery [CIM]
Academy Summer School
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Information for this profile was compiled from interviews with PPS staff and from the PPS CIM Academy Summer School evaluation reports of 2001 (Suggs, 2001).

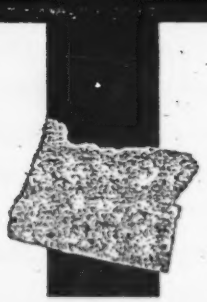
This is just one of many schools in Oregon that have developed programs to assist students with meeting standards. This program is one of the largest in the state, has operated for several years, and has publicly accessible evaluation data to indicate effectiveness.

CIM Summer Academy at a glance:

- Urban
- Grades 5-8
- Academic focus for students not meeting standards

Background

Portland Public Schools has offered a summer school program for grades five through eight for the last four years. The goal is to provide support for students who have not met



state or district standards in mathematics, reading, or writing. For the summer of 2002, the school operated for 23 half-days in four middle schools. Each site has a principal and two head teachers, one for mathematics and one for language arts, with 52 teachers total (in the 2002 summer school). Each class has no more than 15 students. The 2001 summer school had a total of 876. The 2002 summer school had 746.

In Oregon, 10th-grade students receive a Certificate of Initial Mastery [CIM] if they achieve state content and performance standards. To measure their progress students in earlier grades take multiple-choice tests in mathematics and reading, are assessed in their performance of writing and mathematics problem solving, and complete writing, speaking, and mathematics work samples.

During the 1998-1999 school year the PPS district wanted to provide support for students in grades five and eight who were not yet meeting the standards. One such support was the creation of the CIM Academy summer school in the summer of 1999.

The 2002 school year marked the fourth year of the academy. PPS Research, Evaluation, and Assessment staff extensively evaluate the program each year, publish a report on findings, and make recommendations for the next year.

CIM Academy is funded with a combination of Title I, 21st CCLC funds, and Gear-Up grants. The program charges a nominal registration fee of $10-30 per student depending on the time of registration. Because of funding cutbacks, the program has been reduced 50 percent from last year; operating at only four middle schools instead of seven, operating costs were $305,000 for 2002. Total enrollment was limited to 720 students this year versus more than 1,000 last year. Colombo

acknowledges that finding funding to continue the school will be a challenge.

The goals/learner outcomes for the 2002 summer program were focused and specific:

- Thirty percent of the CIM Academy students who are below state standards in reading as measured by the spring 2001 state or district assessment will move to a higher achievement category in literal and inferential comprehension based on a summer posttest.

- Thirty percent of the students who are below state standards in mathematics as measured by the spring 2001 assessment will move to a higher achievement category in calculations and estimations and algebraic relationships based on a summer posttest.

- Sixty percent of the students will complete a math work sample of calculations and estimations (sixth grade) or in algebraic relationships (seventh and eighth grade)

- Sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students will complete one writing work sample (either persuasive or narrative). Fifth-grade students will complete the writing work sample if there is time.

Other desired outcomes:

- 100 percent of students will get a public library card
- 100 percent of fifth-grade students will become competent in multiplication tables
- Students will be better prepared for middle or high school due to the learning gap being bridged between June and September and retention will be higher

- Students, staff, and families will complete reflection papers at the end of summer school

Programming

The mathematics curriculum is focused on calculations, estimations, and algebraic relationships. Students also practice problem solving and communication for preparation in creating math work samples. Although the curriculum may seem rather prescriptive the teachers make the lessons as interesting as possible by having hands-on learning activities. Students work on projects in groups and individually. The curriculum is aligned to the standards requirements and is aligned to the math curriculum of the regular school year.

The literature curriculum is focused on inferential and literal comprehension. Lesson plans emphasize cooperative learning, with literature that would be interesting to the students selected by reading specialists and teachers. The students also practice writing work samples.

A calendar is developed during the planning process that clearly outlines the lesson goals for that day. For example, the lessons for the second day are object solving, and diagrams and sketches. A pretest is given to students. On Days 21 and 22 children are given a posttest on what they have learned during the previous 20 days.

Community and Family Involvement

In the spring parents receive information about the program, which is promoted as offering smaller classes and individualized instruction for struggling students. Colombo has

heard many comments from community members who have been very excited about this opportunity for their children.

The Thursday before the summer session begins, the teachers meet with each student and family members to go over the teacher expectations for the student and the parents' expectations for the student. Students are expected to attend class every day; parents and children must sign a statement that if the student misses more than two unexcused days, they will be dropped from the program. Says Colombo, " We emphasize to parents the need to commit to every day—don't take your family vacation during this time." The discipline policy is clearly outlined at this meeting as well. Both families and staff have commented that these goal conferences are important to determine each student's individual learning needs.

Parents are surveyed to determine if the program met their expectations. The majority of parents have indicated that the summer program has been beneficial to their children's academic progress.

Evaluation and Outcomes

Evaluation reports are available for each year the program has been in session. The data from 2001 indicate that students have shown more improvement than in previous years. "In terms of mean RIT gain, students in all four grade levels and in all four goal areas demonstrated statistically significant growth from the pre- to posttest" (Suggs, 2001, p. 23).

Overall, students showed the greatest achievement growth in mathematics. The data show that students who exceeded,

met, or nearly met standards on a pretest benefited the most from the mathematics curriculum. The reading curriculum, on the other hand, most benefited the lower-achieving students and provided less benefit to the highest achievers.

Colombo is busy comparing scores from last year's summer school with spring 2002 test scores and will have a report later in 2002. She cautions that test scores are not the only indicators of success and do not show the gains children make in their confidence and in building relationships with teachers and each other. "Children have much more positive feelings about academics. They think school can actually be fun!" Clearly, the smaller class size has been very beneficial. With budget cuts in Portland Public Schools increasing regular school year class size to 30, summer school is an opportunity for struggling students to receive individualized instruction. English Language Learners especially gain much from this attention, says Colombo. Students and staff also reflect that smaller class size helped the students foster relationships with the teachers, and reduce behavioral issues. Fortunately, many of these teachers teach in the middle schools during the school year. And most teachers return to teach summer school year after year.

Some student comments from selected reflection papers indicate the benefits they have received from the program:

- In math I never learned how to do ratios that would always get me a bad grade, but now I know how to do it quickly.
- The program has helped me "get a bit more ready for high school...math."
- The best thing about summer school was learning. I think I learned more in one month of summer school than I ever learned in nine months of school....I liked that the classes were smaller (Suggs, 2001, p. 68).

Teachers also reflected on their experiences. Teachers indicated that the most positive experiences about the program were the support of the school administrative staff, teaching small classes, and the other teachers.

Next year some adjustments will be made based on Colombo's observations and the recommendations from the evaluation report. In particular, Colombo wants to add an advanced mathematics section, organize a language arts calendar, and reduce the amount of diagnostic testing. The evaluator recommended that the program continue to be evaluated every year, continue to focus on strengthening the skills of the lowest-achieving students, and determine why mathematics performance increased and use that information to make improvements to the reading curriculum to increase reading performance.

In spite of budget cuts that make it challenging to continue the program, staff and parents hope it will survive, especially Colombo, who advocates strongly for supporting the students who most need assistance. Her enthusiasm for the program shows as she talks animatedly about the marked increase in student's reading and math skills, their interest in school, and improved behavior. She reports that the 2002 program had a higher enrollment than expected, and higher daily attendance than the previous year. Says Colombo, "This program really is a service to the community and to the families—providing a safe, fun, learning experience for students in the summer."

Inchelium Schools and Mary Walker Schools Summer Programs

In 2000, ESD 101 and the Tri-County Consortium of Inchelium, Nine Miles Falls, Northport, Mary Walker, and Newport School Districts received a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to provide expanded-learning opportunities in a safe, drug-free, and supervised environment for children. Grant program activities include summer school programs.

Two school district's programs—Inchelium's Rez Stop and Mary Walker School District—are profiled here. Both were highly recommended by the ESD 101 21st CCLC coordinators and evaluators.

Author Jennifer Railsback had the opportunity to visit both programs in July. The following profiles are based on these visits and data from the 21st CCLC evaluations (Phillips, 2001).

Program

Inchelium Rez Stop
21st Century Community Learning Center
Inchelium School
P.O. Box 285
Inchelium, WA 99138-0285

Contact

Carmen Peone, Rez Stop Director
Phone: 509/722-6181

Rez Stop at a glance:

- Grades 5–9
- Rural
- Culturally congruent activities for Native American students
- Activity-based
- Parent/community involvement (job shadowing, family events)

BACKGROUND

Inchelium is located on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation about 40 miles north of Spokane, and 40 miles east of Grand Coulee Dam on Lake Roosevelt. The reservation covers more than 2,000 square miles, one of the largest reservations in Washington. The area is prime timber country, and inhabited by abundant wildlife such as elk, deer, and grouse.

The community strives to give their children the best possible opportunities for educational and spiritual growth. One major accomplishment toward these goals has been the Rez Stop 21st CCLC Program. Rez Stop is short for Raising our Educational Zone, Standing Tall On Pride, which means:

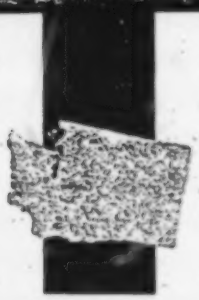
- Raising our academic and social standards to higher levels.
- Providing educational support through tutoring and enrichment activities that focus on educational games and hands-on projects.
- Students in the Zone have respect for one another and positive attitudes. Hornet bucks are given to students who work hard, offer assistance to others, work well as a team, or exhibit other positive social behaviors. An auction is held at the end of the year for children to redeem their Hornet bucks.

- Students learn that they are in control of making positive choices and are guided in standing up against bullying, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other unsafe behaviors.
- Standing Tall on culture means respecting all cultures and learning about their own Native culture.
- Moving On to bigger and better accomplishments with the support and guidance of community members, parents, staff, and an advisory board.
- Rez Stop teaches the students pride in self, community, and country.

Rez Stop offers a summer program for students in grades 5–9. Ninety-one percent of the students who attend are Native American, and most students are in grades six and seven. The summer program provides students who are at an age where they are most susceptible to negative social influences with safe, drug-free, enriching activities. Rez Stop offers a nurturing, supportive, small-group environment with personal attention from staff members. "We focus on the whole person," comments one staff person, Kathy Jimenez, "We let each child know they are special."

PROGRAMMING

Each week of the 20-day summer program has a theme that incorporates all Rez Stop principles and goals. During culture week children work on projects related to their culture, such as beadwork or making breastplates and cradleboards. The children go on field trips to area museums. During sports week, the children participate in water play, a basketball tournament, canoeing, kickball, croquet, and board games. Enrichment week activities this year included a luau, survival training, and water safety. Every Thursday is field trip day. Children have

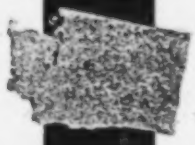


been canoeing and swimming, and some went on a campout. During activities week children paint T-shirts, and create puzzle sugar cookies. At the end of the day, before lunch, the teachers judged each cookie in the categories of "best teamwork," "most creative," "most detailed," and a special category for a cookie that depicted the Titanic as "the most sinkable."

The creative energy the staff put into designing, planning, and coordinating these activities is quite evident. Peone emphasizes that the children also take part in the planning, that this is their program, and their input is valued. "We listen to what the kids like and don't like in group and one-on-one sessions."

Unlike some other summer programs that focus on specific academic goals, the 21st CCLC Grant programs are purposefully oriented toward providing enriching and challenging activities, hands-on thematic learning, and having children enjoy learning with constructive use of their time outside a traditional school setting. "Our summer program is about enrichment, not about forcing kids to do their homework," says Peone. The summer programs are not viewed as isolated events but as just one part of a whole school-year program for the students. The activities and goals for the summer are aligned with goals for the entire year.

One challenge in coordinating this summer program, admit staff members, is not knowing how many students will attend from day to day. Some days there might be 10 students, other days there might be 30. But staff members are easygoing about the schedule. "We just learn to be flexible with our plans," says Jimenez. Another challenge is the variety of age differences in the program. Sometimes older kids don't want to hang out with the younger ones, commented one staff member. But older children are encouraged to

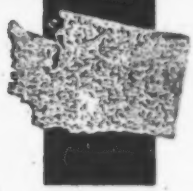


come, especially when they can participate in activities they can tailor to their interests and skill level. Also, the older children enjoy mentoring the younger ones. "We try," says Peone, "to keep them busy with activities but also try to recognize the need for down-time, especially for the older students who need to just sit and visit with their friends for awhile and not have to think after a hard day at school."

The staff members believe one important goal—teaching children positive behaviors—has been very successful. Many of these children are from "at-risk" families where they are used to having unstructured time on their hands. Children learn the basic rules of common courtesy, and learn to respect each other's opinions. "We have complete turnarounds in social behavior," says Peone. "Positive adult interaction is a big reason these kids choose to come to this program rather than other programs," says Jimenez. "They feel safe and respected here."

Parent and community involvement is another reason this program is so successful. Chaperones for field trips are different each time and there are plenty of them. For job shadowing week, community members and parents volunteered to have children visit their workplaces at the community clinic, tribal health office, Boise Cascade lumber mill, the local restaurant, and store. One parent told Peone during lunch that the job shadowing was a wonderful opportunity for these children to experience the world of work. Additionally, the program has wonderful collaboration from the many tribal and local organizations such as the Tribal Health office, Fish and Wildlife, the 4-H club, and the forestry departments. Says Peone, "Inchelium is one big family who care about and look after one another's kids."

See the evaluation of the Inchelium program on page 69.



Program

Mary Walker School District Summer Program
500 N. 4th St.
Springdale, WA 99173

Contact

Wendi Lind
21st Century Community Learning Center Program Director
Phone: 509/258-7357

Mary Walker at a glance:

- Grades 1–8
- Rural
- Enrichment-focused learning activities emphasizing hands-on learning and cultural understanding

Background

Springdale, Washington, is a rural community of about 250 families located an hour's drive northwest of Spokane. The road to Springdale winds through forested and farming country. The town's main street is lined with a few boarded-up buildings, one or two taverns, and a grocery store.

With fewer amenities than larger towns, Springdale also has few extracurricular summer activities for children, and most families can't afford to send their children to expensive programs out of town. As a result, Springdale school, community members, and families have sought resources to create supervised, enriching, educational—and yes, fun—activities for their children after school and during the summer. Says coordinator Wendi Lind, "This has been a wonderful benefit

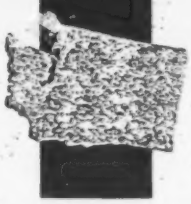
for the entire community. We provide the only structured activities for kids—many of whom would otherwise be watching television or playing video games."

PROGRAMMING

Now in its third year of operation, the summer program runs from June 10 through July 12, from 9:00 to 12:30. About 65 children in grades 1–8 attend each summer. Grades K–4 and 5–8 are grouped separately for sports activities and academic lessons, but come together for other events.

Lind works with a staff of six to coordinate cultural and sports activities. The staff includes two instructional aides; a teacher; the school's coach, who organizes the sports activities; bus driver; and high school volunteers. This past year, the children took a breathtaking "around the world in 20 days" tour of different countries and states. During their visits, they had a lesson in the history and culture of the region, a cultural feast, and worked on projects related to the culture. On the day I visited, the class was visiting New Orleans during Mardi Gras. The children's excitement and interest in the theme was apparent. When I walked into the classroom, older children were providing the finishing touches to the "floats" that they would exhibit in the parade.

Later in the morning, all the children gather for a review of the lessons they have learned. First, attendance is taken (about 35 children were counted). The teacher, Ms. Shelton, then asked the students what facts about Mardi Gras they remembered from the day before. Most of the kids remembered that Mardi Gras means Fat Tuesday, and that the official colors had special meanings (purple is justice, gold is power, green is faith).



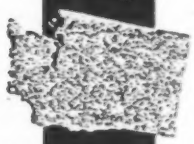
After the review, the teachers passed out the food for the feast. Ms. Shelton reminds the children to start eating only after everyone has been served. She also asks the children to taste each item before they decide they didn't like it and not to denigrate the food—"Remember, no icks," she says. Many of the children looked dubiously at the food, especially at the shrimp jambalaya, but almost everyone cleaned their plates. Two children who had a special frosting color on top of their "King Cakes" were to be crowned Kings of the Mardi Gras (according to tradition) and lead the Mardi Gras parade.

After the feast the children assembled for the parade, with their decorated masks and floats. The children paraded into the gym past the judges, who judged for most creative mask and float, and best theme. The children all received small Mardi Gras gifts wrapped in colorful tissue paper.

The focus on cultural enrichment and project-based learning involves the children in a way that a stricter academic focus did not the previous year. Even so, this does not mean that summer activities are just "fun and games." Two of the most important goals for the program are to increase constructive use of time and to increase youth commitment to learning. The staff members are encouraged by the students' enthusiasm for the learning activities.

Evaluation of Mary Walker and Inchelium

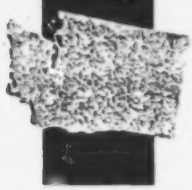
Programs that receive a 21st CCLC grant are required to have an evaluation done of the whole program. Feedback data from students in both Inchelium and Mary Walker show a high degree of satisfaction. In the draft of the 2000–2001



report (Phillips, 2001), the top three benefits of the summer program as reported by students were following the rules better, working better in groups, and getting better grades. This emphasis on working in groups was evident to me when I observed the students collaborating on projects. At Inchelium, all the students said that the summer program would help them follow rules better. As Inchelium staff have said, children knowing how and why to follow rules is a crucial step to their success in school and in life. "Doing better in school" and "getting better grades" received higher than 68 percent at Springdale, and higher than 75 percent at Inchelium.

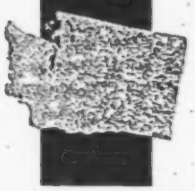
The draft of the evaluation report for both sites indicated that an important part of the summer program was children connecting with other children and adults. "It was interesting to note that the students found connecting with adults almost as enjoyable as being with their friends. This may indicate that the program had indeed hired the right people to run the summer program." (Phillips, 2001, p. 9).

Because the program is an entire school year program with homework center, supervised after-school activities, goal setting, and 4-H enrichment classes, much of the evaluation focused on how the program benefited students throughout the year, rather than just the summer. The data for both Inchelium and Mary Walker indicate that students who attended the programs for more than 30 days during the year showed a greater progress in academic and school performance measures compared to students who attended fewer than 30 days. Overall GPA and mathematics and English grades improved steadily throughout the year and were higher for students who attended more than 30 days.



The report indicates that regular attendance in these programs is associated with an increased likelihood of success in school. "Nationally, at-risk middle school students show a trend toward lower test scores on almost all measures from Fall to Spring; regular attendance in the Rez Stop programs appears to decrease the impact of this trend" (Phillips, 2001, p. 15).

The most important result, according to the evaluation report, was that "Rez Stop and Mary Walker programs have helped disengaged students find a means of participating in the school culture, as measured by teacher rating scales, with the results that classroom participation increased along with regular program attendance" (Phillips, 2001, p. 15).



Program

Y.U. LEARN Summer School Program
YMCA University Leadership Education Adventure
Responsibility NOW!

Meredith Mathews East Madison YMCA
Serving Aki Kurose, Hamilton, Meany, and Washington
Middle Schools, all part of Seattle Public Schools

Contact

Sprout Hochberg, Director
Phone: 206/252-7744
E-mail: sahochberg@seattleschools.org

Y.U. LEARN at a glance:

- Urban middle schools
- Academic and behavior skill building for at-risk students
- Mentoring by minority college students
- YMCA–school district partnership

Background

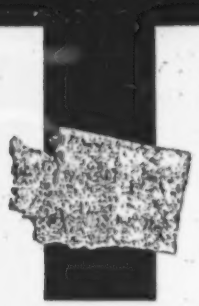
This program is a joint collaboration of the YMCA and the Seattle Public Schools. Other community partners include the University of Washington for the summer of 2001 and Seattle Central Community College for the summer of 2002. The program's goals are to provide academic enrichment and behavior skills for children who are students in four of Seattle's inner-city middle schools. The students come from schools where the YMCA is the Community Learning Center lead partner. These schools vary in poverty level, test scores, discipline rates, and racial and ethnic diversity.

However, the students chosen for the summer school program are all students who will benefit either academically, socially, and/or behaviorally from Y.U. LEARN.

Three years ago the YMCA of Seattle was interested in providing purposeful services to inner-city middle school students. The YMCA approached the district superintendent about the partnership. Likewise, the superintendent has a strong interest in having the school be part of a greater community. Two YMCA staff members are based in each school. "We are part of the school, not a separate program. Many kids and parents don't realize I am a YMCA staff person," emphasizes director Sprout Hochberg. In her parent information letter, Hochberg says "Y.U. LEARN is ... built upon YMCA values [of respect, responsibility, honesty, caring, faith, and fun] and Seattle Public Schools academic standards. Together we are motivating students to become capable and successful lifelong learners through academic achievement, hands-on adventures, and strong personal and community relationships."

PROGRAMMING

The Y.U. LEARN summer program is based at a college campus in Seattle, an excellent setting for children to experience what college life is like. Every Monday college students talk to the children about career opportunities, drug and safety issues, and other topics. High school students from the YMCA program, Teach Change, also give presentations to the middle school students on issues such as violence, gang involvement, and domestic violence. Mentoring and modeling of appropriate behavior by these college and high school students makes a very powerful impact on these kids, especially since these mentors come from the same community.



The summer school program runs for six weeks, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Bus transportation and meals are provided. This year Y.U. LEARN is offered for students in four middle schools. Due to increased funding from a Gates Grant to the YMCA of Greater Seattle, the community learning centers will expand to more middle schools for a total of seven in the district.

The daily schedule is exciting and diverse, a combination of academics, electives, and field trips. After a morning assembly of brain teasers, vocabulary words of the day, and announcements, the children have one hour and twenty minutes of academic time in the morning and another hour and a quarter after a 15-minute recess/break. Academic time is spent on mathematics and language arts; the lessons are correlated with the Washington state learning standards. These periods are taught by certified teachers from the district who work with two groups of 25 children.

After lunch, activities vary according to the day. Mondays are guest speaker days. On Wednesdays the students go on field trips to places such as the aquarium and the Pacific Science Center. All field trips are tied to the academic part of the program. Tuesday and Thursday electives are ones that the students select for the whole program. There is something for everyone—cooking, chess, photography, martial arts, and acting, to name a few. Electives are facilitated by experts in each field like the Seattle Chess Foundation, Youth in Focus, Jet City Improv, and the SNACK program.

The summer program's grand finale is a weeklong camping adventure trip to YMCA Camp Orkila on Orcas Island. "The kids earn the opportunity to go on this trip," emphasizes

Hochberg, "by showing academic progress, and good behavior." Hochberg emphasizes that when a school district partners with an outside agency, each partner must have the same focus and mission, or the partnership won't work. Each partner must also commit to finding sustainable funding for the program. Someone must be designated as the leader in writing grants, connecting with other organizations, promoting the program to potential funders, and highlighting the unique aspects of the program. Fundraisers shouldn't be afraid to contact potential funders several times if necessary, says Hochberg. "Sometimes it takes that long for funders to hear you."

With her extensive background in summer camps, Hochberg understands how academic summer programs differ in purpose and content from the summer camps she used to run. "Middle school kids really need more ownership in what they are doing. But they also need more direction than many summer camps provide. They also need more academic support in the summer. Many kids end the school year and fall back before the start of school in the fall. We need to do more for them."

In the first year of Y.U. LEARN, the YMCA was able to serve 44 students, all sixth-graders, with 38 completing the program successfully and 19 going on the camping trip. In the second year of Y.U. LEARN, the YMCA served 80 students, both sixth- and seventh-graders, with 72 completing the program successfully and 41 going camping. Next year, there will be some expansion because there was a waiting list this year for students. Notable improvements in the second year of the program were increased parental involvement, great relationship building with Seattle Central Community College, increased academic time and quality, and increased quality of electives with more community partners.

RESOURCES

Borman, G.D., & Boulay, M. (Eds.). (In press). *Summer learning: Research, policies, and programs.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Anderson, M. (n.d.). *Beyond fun and games: Tips and resources for summer programs.* New York: LEARNS-Bank Street College of Education. Retrieved August 26, 2002, from www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/ost/summer.pdf

Caplan, J.G., McElvain, C.K., & Walter, K.E. (2002). *Beyond the bell: A toolkit for creating effective after-school programs* (2nd ed.). Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Available by calling NCREL at (630) 649-6642.

FUNDING RESOURCES

Afterschool.gov (www.afterschool.gov) Clearinghouse provides links to funding and federal resources to support programs for out-of-school hours. Information for launching successful programs is also provided.

Beaverton Education Foundation
(www.beavertonkids.org) One of many local education foundations providing grants for out-of-school time programs.

Finance Project (www.financeproject.org) Resources for financing and sustaining out-of-school programs.

National Endowment for the Arts
(www.nea.gov/artforms/Artsed/Artsed1.html) Provides grants for early childhood, school-based, and community-based art learning programs including summer programs.

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
(www.niost.org)

21st Century Community Learning Centers
(www.ed.gov/21stcclc/) Provides Community Learning Center grants through state allocations for academic enrichment opportunities during nonschool hours. Those eligible to receive these grants from the states are local education agencies, community-based organizations, other public or private entities, or a consortia of such entities. States are required to make awards only to applicants that will serve students who attend schools with concentrations of poor students. States must provide a priority for projects that target services to students attending low-performing schools.

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